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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 279956

FOLLOWING REPEAT DACCA 5757 ACTION SECSTATE NFO NEW DELHI
ISLAMABAD CALCUTTA 17 DEC

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5757

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN
SUBJ: INDIA AND BANGLADESH: CHAVAN'S FAMILIARIZATION VISIT

REF: DACCA 5672

SUMMARY: INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN SPENT DECEMBER 7-10 IN DACCAA. WHILE LITTLE CONCRETE WAS ACHIEVED - OR INTENDED - CHAVAN GAINED A FIRST-HAND IMPRESSION OF THE ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN INDO-BENGALEE RELATIONS. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HIS CRISP AND BUSINESS-LIKE STYLE SAT A BIT UNEASILY WITH THE BENGALEES. END SUMMARY.

1. INDIAN FOMIN Y.B. CHAVAN PAID A THREE AND ONE-HALF DAY VISIT TO DACCA WHICH ENDED ON DECEMBER 10. DURING HIS STAY IN THE BENGALEE CAPITAL, HE HELD A FORMAL MEETING WITH FOMIN KAMAL HOSSEIN AND ALSO MET WITH INDUSTRIES MINISTER SYED NAZRUL ISLAM, CONFIDENTIAL

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TRADE MINISTER KHONDKAR MUSHTAQUE AHMED, HOME MINISTER MANSOOR ALI,

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FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES ABDUR RAB SERNIABAOSF AND PRIMIN SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN. THE INDIAN FOMIN ALSO PAID COURTESY CALLS ON PRESIDENT MOHAMMADULLAH AND AWAMI LEAGUE HEAD KAMARUZZAMAN. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT, A LENGTHY JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS RELEASED (COPY BEING POUCHED) WHICH DEALT IN LARGE MEASURE WITH BILATERAL MATTERS BUT REFERRED BRIEFLY TO RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND SPARED ROOM FOR SOME OF THE MATTERS WHICH FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN THE NON-ALIGNED RUBRIC.

2. THE COMMUNIQUE, ITS LENGTH NOTWITHSTANDING, IS MORE THAN NORMALLY INSUBSTANTIAL AND SUGGESTS THAT WHILE CHAVAN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE KEY ISSUES IN INDO-BENGALEE RELATIONS, NO CONCRETE RESULTS WERE FORTHCOMING-OR PERHAPS INTENDED. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRGEN FOR SUB-CONTINENTAL AFFAIRS, KAISER MURSHED, SAYS THAT THIS WAS THE CASE, AND CHARACTERIZED CHAVAN'S VISIT AS INTENDED SOLELY TO ENABLE THE RECENTLY-APPOINTED FOMIN TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF MORE IMMEDIATELY WITH THE VARIOUS MATTERS WHICH ENGAGE BANGLADESH AND INDIA; MURSHED CITES CHAVAN'S RECENT VISIT TO SRI LANKA AND A FORTHCOMING TRIP TO AFGHANISTAN AS OTHER VISITS FOR FAMILIARIZATION. INDIAN DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER J. N. DIXIT ALSO STRESSES THE EDUCATIONAL (FOR CHAVAN) ASPECTS OF THE VISIT BUT LEAVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE INDIAN FOMIN INTENDED TO ACCOMPLISH CERTAIN INTANGIBLE ENDS, AND DID SO. IN SUM, THESE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD PLACING INDO-BENGALEA RELATIONS ON A SOMEWHAT MORE BUSINESS-LIKE BASIS; THAT SOME BENGA-LEES (SEE REFTEL) MAY HAVE FOUND THIS UNPALATABLE IS NOT SURPRISING.

3. ECONOMIC RELATIONS, INVOLVING BOTH TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT, FIGURED IN THE TALKS. AS THE COMMUNIQUE REVEALED, THE INDIANS HAVE FOUND THE BENGALEES MOVING SOMEWHAT LESS PROMPTLY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL AND COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS THEN THEY WOULD LIKE, AND THE STATEMENT IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE THAT MORE EXPEDITIOUS PROSECUTION IS REQUIRED REFLECTS A MEASURE OF SUCCESS ON THE INDIAN SIDE IN EFFORTS TO PROMPT THE BENGALEES TO MORE TIMELY ACTION. THE COMMUNIQUE MAKES NO DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE INDO-BANGLADESH BALANCED TRADE AND PAYMENTS AGREEMENT SINCE BENGALEE TRADE MINISTER MUSHTAQUE AHMED WAS ABOUT THE DEPART FOR NEW DELHI (HE LEFT ON DECEMBER 14) FOR DISCUSSIONS ON ITS FUTURE (SEE DACCA 4882). HOWEVER, DIXIT STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF A STATEMENT MADE BY CHAVAN THAT THE LEVELS OF TRADE MUST BE ON A CONFIDENTIAL

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"REALISTIC BASIS" (I.E., RELATED TO PRODUCTIVITY) AND THE ADJUST-MENTS OF ACCOUNTS MUST BE IN FREE FOREIGN EXCHANGE. THIS, SAID THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER, WAS THE TYPE OF TOUGH-MINDED THOUGHT CHAVAN SOUGHT TO IMPRESS UPON THE BENGALEES.

4. BOTH SIDES APPEAR TO HAVE FOCUSSED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION ON THE PROBLEM OC SMUGGLING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNIQUE NOTED THAT THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRS DISCUSSED THE "STRINGENT

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MEASURES" THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES WERE TAKING, AND "RE-AFFIRMED THEIR DETERMINATION TO CURB THE ACTIVITIES OF THESE CULPRITS". IN HIS CONVERSATIONS AND IN A PRESS CONFERENCE CHAVAN REMINDED THE BENGALEES THAT SMUGGLING IS A TWO-WAY STREET-IMPLYING CLEARLY THAT BANGLADESH HAD DONE LESS THAN IT MIGHT-AND URGED THEM TO AVOID THE EASY INSINUATIONS THAT SOMEHOW OR OTHER THE GOI AND THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL CONNIVE AT THE SMUGGLING. HE ADDED THAT CHARGES OF INDIAN CONNIVANCE IN SMUGGLING MAY WELL BE "MISCHIEVIOUS PROPAGANDA" PUT OUT BY ELEMENTS WHO WISH TO WEAKEN INDO-BENRALEE RELATIONS.

5. THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ISSUE WAS MENTIONED ONLY BRIEFLY-AND NOT BY NAME - IN THE COMMUNIQUE. NOTING THAT THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE JOINT RIVERS COMMISSION HAD BEEN REVIEWED, THE INDIAN AND BENGALEES "TOOK NOTE OF THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EVOLUTION OF A COMMON APPROACH FOR A SOLUTION OF THIS URGENT AND IMPORTANT ISSUE". MURSHED SAYS THAT NO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS OF FARAKKA TOOK PLACE ALTHOUGH DIXIT STATES THAT CHAVAN DID EXPLAIN TO THE BEN-GALEES THE GOI'S CONCERNS ABOUT CALCUTTA (ESPECIALLY SHOULD A SNAP ELECTION BE CALLED IN INDIA) BUT WENT ON TO ASSURE THEM THAT WATERS WILL NOT BE DIVERTED FROM THE GANGA TO THE HOOGHLY WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE. MURSHED SUMMED IT UP WHEN HE SAID THAT ONLY THE TWO PRIMINS CAN SETTLE THE ISSUE, AND THEY WILL HAVE TO MEET TO DO THAT.

6. THE NEW ISSUE IN THE INDO-BENGALEE EQUATION WAS THE PROBLEM OF DELINEATING THE MARITIME BOUNDARY BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH, A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE MOMENT AS THE TWO COUNTRIES CONTEMPLATE OIL EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION IN THE BAY OF BENGAL. THE SEN-SITIVITY OF THIS ISSUE IS PERHAPS MOST BOLDLY UNDERSCORED BY THE FACT THAT IT WAS NOT MENTIONED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE. THE BEN-GALEES MAY WELL HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE CHAVAN VISIT WOULD SPUR GREATER MOVEMENT TWOARD RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE (SEE REFTEL) BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE ONLY SUBSTANTIVE ACTION WAS AN EXCHANGE OF MAPS. DIXIT, WHO HIMSELF PERHAPS THOUGHT EARLIER THAT MOVEMENT WAS POSSIBLE (SEE DACCA 5461), NOTED THAT WHILE BANGLADESH HAS FORMULATED THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT WOULD DEFINE ITS VARIOUS CLASSES OF JURISDICTION OVER ADJACENT WATERS, INDIA HAS YET TO DO SO. THIS HE SEES AS LEAVING ROOM FOR ACCOMODATION ON INDIA'S PART. (SINCE BANGLADESH HAS ALREADY DETERMINED ITS BASE POINTS, ITS FREEDOM TO ALTER THE DELINEATION OF THE WATERS OVER WHICH IT CLAIMS JURISDICTION MAY PROVE MORE DIFFICULT - AND THUS MUCH RISKIER POLITICALLY.) DIXIT SAID THAT THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS HAD DONE NO MORE THAN AGREE TO AVOID BEING TOO RIGID IN THIS VERY DELICATE MATTER.

7. FURTHER AFIELD, THE INDIANS AND BENGALEES AGREED THAT:
--NORMALIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA WILL REQUIRE MOVEMENT BY PAKISTAN

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ON THE REPATRIATION OF NON-BENGALEES AND THE DIVISION OF ASSETS
WITH BANGLADESH;
--NON-ALIGNMENT IS THE BEST POLICY;
--"EXPANSION OF GREAT POWER RIVALRY AND MILITARY ACTIVITIES" IN
THE INDIAN OCEANIS TROUBLING, AND THE EXPANSION OF "MILITARY NAVAL
FACILITIES" AT DIEGO GARCIA IS A MATTER OF PARTICULAR CONCERN;
--RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALES-
TINIANS IS "WELCOME";
--CONTINUING SINO-INDIAN TENSION IS WORRISOME; AND
--THE PEOPLES OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA SHOULD BE FREE TO DECIDE
THEIR OWN FUTURE "WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE."

8. COMMENT: CHAVAN'S VISIT WAS INTENDED TO ACHIEVE FOUR ENDS. IT
CLEARLY OFFERED HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN PERSONAL FAMILIARITY
WITH THE ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES WITH WHICH AND WITH WHOM HE WILL
DEAL. DIXIT ADDS THAT THE THREE ADDITIONAL PURPOSES WERE AT LEAST
EQUALLY IMPORTANT. THE INDIAN DHC SAYS THAT CHAVAN IS THOUGHT BY
THE BENGALEES TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE ADVOCATES OF A MORE CAUTIOUS
POLICY TOWARD EAST PAKISTAN IN 1971, AND THUS HIS VISIT WAS
INTENDED TO DSPEL ANY LINGERING DOUBTS AS TO HIS GOODWILL
TOWARDD BANGLADESH. ADDITIONALLY, CHAVAN IS BUSY TRYING TO PUT
HIS OWN IMPRESS ON THE MANNER IN WHICH INDIA IS TO CONDUCT ITS
AFFAIRS, AND MURSHED NOTED THAT CHAVAN'S APPROACH TO DISCUSSIONS
WAS MUCH CRISPER THAN THE STYLE OF SWARAN SINGH. (MURSHED ALSO
SAID THAT CHAVAN SEEMED MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE IN DISCUSSING ECON-
OMIC ISSUES, REFLECTING HIS EXPERIENCE AS FINANCE MINISTER.)
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9. LASTLY, CHAVAN CAME AS A SURROGATE FOR MRS. GANDHI. DIXIT SAYS
THAT THE BENGALEES HAVE WANTED THE INDIAN PRIMIN TO VISIT DACCA,
AND HAD EVEN FLOATED STORIES THAT SHE MIGHT COME BEFORE THE END
OF THE YEAR. THIS SHE HAS NOT WANTED TO DO, HE SAID, FEARING THAT
SHE COULD CONFRONT A SERIOUS DILEMMA IN REGARD TO THE FARAKKA
BARRAGE ISSUE. THE BENGALEES WOULD EXPECT A FINAL RESOLUTION,
AND SHE APPARENTLY SUSPECTS THAT NO FORMULA WILL BE SATISFACTORY
TO BOTH SIDES. CHAVAN WAS THUS SENT, INPART, TO POSTPONE THE
MATTER FURTHER.
BOSTER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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